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**Contact: Scott Darnell**  
**(505) 819-1398**  
[scott.darnell@state.nm.us](mailto:scott.darnell@state.nm.us)

## **GOVERNOR SUSANA MARTINEZ ANNOUNCES AWARD OF HEALTH INSURANCE EXCHANGE GRANT**

### *Grant Will Help New Mexico Develop and Establish an Exchange*

**SANTA FE** – Governor Susana Martinez announced today that New Mexico has been awarded a \$34.2 million grant by the federal Health and Human Services (HHS) Department to help establish an affordable health insurance exchange in the state.

New Mexico submitted a Level 1 Health Insurance Exchange Establishment Grant on 9/29/2011 to begin establishing the New Mexico Health Insurance Exchange (NMHIX). The state Human Services Department (HSD) was informed of the award of grant this morning.

“States can advance the cause of patient freedom and choice, and take advantage of state and federal opportunities to improve health. We must modernize health insurance markets in New Mexico, built on the fundamental principles of real consumer choice, true market-based competition and value, and the grant is a big step in the right direction,” said Governor Martinez.

The grant funding will be used to establish the NMHIX over the next 12 months and to meet the timelines established by the federal government to become operational by 2014. The grant will help plan a governance structure, hire staff, and fund contractors. The state will also be able to research and prepare to plan to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse, develop a multi-year operations plan, and determine funding mechanisms so NMHIX is self-sustaining by 2015.

While this is ongoing, the Office of Health Care Reform will also work to identify, as necessary, state laws that need to be amended to comply with federal laws.

NMHIX will act as a one-stop-shop for those who are seeking health insurance coverage for themselves and their families, and for small businesses to have options to insure their employees. The goal of establishing an exchange is to help bring down the rate of uninsured and to reform the insurance marketplace in New Mexico by directly connecting consumers with health insurance carriers. New Mexico's exchange will include a call center, tribal assistance center, and customer assistance through navigators to help individuals and small businesses choose health insurance benefits tailored to their specific needs.

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